



Borough of Kendal

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR

1972

Stricklandgate House, P.O. Box 18, Kendal

Telephone Number: Kendal 23502

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TITUS WILSON & SON LTD.

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NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Area of the Borough in acres	3,705
Population at 1971 Census	...	...	...	...	21,596
Population (Registrar-General's mid year estimate)					21,830
Inhabited houses	...	...	...	...	8,343
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£963,802
Product of a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£9,000
Rate in the Pound levied	...	...	...	...	84p-94½p
of which the County rate was	...	...	...	...	55p

Kendal is picturesquely situated in the valley of the River Kent, the greater part being on the west bank built on ground rising steeply in a series of terraced houses up Kendal Fell to about 500 feet above sea level. The buildings on the east bank are situated on undulating lowlands rising from 137 feet to 200 feet contour. The dale of Kendal runs north to south with the level of the eastern boundary between 300 and 600 feet above sea level.

The geology of the Borough is sharply divided by the Fellside. The steep eminence of Kendal Fell on the west is composed of carboniferous limestones which represent remains of the dome which once covered the Lake District, and the sharp division is caused by a fault in this system. To the east of this fault denudation has taken place and the out-cropping rocks are Kirkby Moor Flags of the Upper Ludlow Series of the Silurian System. Alluvial deposits and some Basement Conglomerates form the small northern area of the Borough.

The climate is mild, the town is sheltered by the Fell from the prevailing westerly winds, and the open aspect to the south provides full access to sunlight. Temperature gradient inversions are frequent at night but are soon dispelled in the mornings. The rainfall normally varies between 50 and 55 inches a year and light falls of snow may be expected for one or two weeks in the late winter. The low-lying land in the north of the Borough is liable to flooding when the River Kent is in spate.

Economically Kendal serves a triple function. Primarily it is a market town, being situated in the heart of the southern portion of Westmorland and the centre of a large agricultural community within a radius of some eight miles. Secondly it is an important stopping place on the main road, with seasonal peak-loads of tourist traffic. Thirdly Kendal has become an important centre of light industries which have guaranteed constant employment to the inhabitants and brought considerable prosperity to the town.

The local industries include a wide variety of manufacturing processes. There are factories for boots and shoes, hosiery and shirts, carpets, tobacco and snuff, woollen mills, stone and lime works, engineering works, and processing establishments for cream and milk products.

In addition there are ample opportunities for employment in the shops, cafes, hotels and business premises. The variety of these opportunities for both men and women has kept Kendal happily free from general unemployment and provided that economic security and prosperity which is a most important factor in the maintenance of the public health.

STAFF.

Name.	Qualifications.	Office.	Whole or Part Time.	Other Offices
Madge, F. T.	M.D., Ch.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.	Medical Officer of Health	Part	M.O.H. Combined County Districts of Westmorland
Major, J. H.	M.A.P.H.I., M.R.S.H.	Chief Public Health Inspector	Whole	—
Edleston, R.	M.A.P.H.I. Cert. R.S.H.	Senior Additional Public Health Inspector	Whole	—
Winnard, T. G.	M.A.P.H.I.	Additional Public Health Inspector	Whole	—
Baron, R. W.	M.A.P.H.I.	Additional Public Health Inspector to 31.1.72	Whole	—
Osborne, K. S.	M.A.P.H.I.	Additional Public Health Inspector from 1.5.72	Whole	—
Askew, J.	—	Clerk	Whole	—
Johnston, D.	—	Junior Clerk to 30.6.72	Whole	—
Inman, S.	—	Junior Clerk from 24.7.72	Whole	—
Machell, B. M.	—	Clerk to Medical Officer of Health	Part	Clerk to M.O.H. Combined County Districts of Westmorland

Staff Changes.

Mr R. W. Baron resigned on 31st January, 1972, and was replaced by Mr. K. S. Osborne on 1st May, 1972, in the post of Additional Public Health Inspector.

Miss D. Johnston resigned on 30th June, 1972, and was replaced by Miss S. Inman on 24th July, 1972, in the post of Junior Clerk in the Health Department.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The following extracts are made from information supplied by the Registrar-General, with figures for last year for comparison.

Area of the Borough in acres 3,705

	1971	1972
Estimated civilian population (mid year) ..	21,410	21,830
Live Births. Legitimate— males	148	153
females	176	129
Illegitimate— males	16	13
females	10	12
Total	350	307
Crude Rate per 1,000 population	16.3	14.1
Corrected Rate per 1,000 population	17.4	14.1
Birth Rate for England and Wales	16.0	14.8
Illegitimate Birth Rate per 1,000 live births	74	81
Still Births. Legitimate— males	2	1
females	3	2
Illegitimate— males	1	—
females	—	—
Total	6	3
Total (live and still) births ..	356	310
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	17	10
Rate for England and Wales ..	12	12
Deaths. males	135	133
females	136	125
Total	271	258
Crude Rate per 1,000 population	12.7	11.8
Corrected Rate per 1,000 population	11.3	10.4
Rate for England and Wales ..	11.6	12.1

	1971	1972
Infantile Deaths (under 1 year)		
Total deaths under 1 year.. ..	4	2
Rate per 1,000 live births	11	7
Rate for England and Wales	18	17
Legitimate	4	2
Rate per 1,000 legitimate live births	17	7
Illegitimate	—	—
Rate per 1,000 illegitimate live births	—	—
Neonatal Deaths (under 4 weeks)		
Total neonatal deaths	3	2
Rate per 1,000 live births	9	7
Rate for England and Wales	12	12
Early Neonatal Deaths (under 1 week)		
Total early neonatal deaths	3	2
Rate per 1,000 live births	9	7
Rate for England and Wales	10	10
Perinatal Mortality		
Stillbirths and deaths under 1 week.. .. .	9	5
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	25	16
Rate for England and Wales	22	22
Maternal Mortality		
Total Deaths	—	—
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	—	—
Rate for England and Wales	0.17	0.15

Deaths from certain causes:—	1971.	1972.
Cancer	47	54
Measles	Nil	Nil
Whooping Cough	Nil	Nil
The main causes of death were:—		
Heart Disease ... ..	...	93
Cancer ... ..	...	54
Cerebro Vascular lesions ... ..	...	45

COMMENTARY ON THE VITAL STATISTICS.

Kendal has grown slowly over the past century. The average annual rate of growth was about a half per cent, with some acceleration in the more recent years. A few boundary changes have added to the numbers, but the overall picture was one of slow growth.

The published report on the 1971 Census records that 21,596 persons were counted as being present in the Borough on the night of 25/26th April, 1971. A factual count in a town such as ours is influenced by the time of year when it is made, and be different from the normal resident population. The Registrar-General's mid year estimate for the latter was 21,830.

Birth Rate.

The current rate is calculated to make a fair comparison with the rest of England and Wales. On this basis the Kendal birth rate was slightly below the national average in 1972.

Death Rate.

Kendal's death rate has fluctuated near the national average in recent years.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

The general incidence of illness can be assessed by the weekly number of new claims for sickness benefit at our local National Insurance offices. A logarithmic graph of these figures shows a regular seasonal pattern over the years, and any variations are usually worth investigating. The general level is some measure of the local community health.

I am most grateful to my colleagues in general practice, and in the hospital services, for their prompt help in notifying infectious diseases. The control of the more serious of these illnesses is one of the most important duties of our department.

An epidemic of measles was the main feature of 1972. The outbreak started in mid January, and reached its peak during late March and early April. 362 cases were notified. The second half of the year showed only a few sporadic cases.

11 cases of infective jaundice were scattered throughout the year. Notification of a case of malaria, contracted abroad, was a reminder that world travel brings tropical diseases into our local community. One case of typhoid infection was discovered by routine surveillance of the town sewers.

A smallpox alert followed an incident just over the border of an adjacent county. Tracing of contacts, vaccination, and surveillance occasioned extra vigilance and much activity. Fortunately there were no cases of smallpox here, but it was an anxious time.

Immunisation against measles is still too recent to assess its results in our own locality. But we are hoping that it will eventually be as successful as the other immunisations against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, smallpox, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis.

Hospital and Ambulance Arrangements for Infectious Diseases.

Hospital accommodation for infectious diseases is provided by the Manchester Regional Hospital Board at Beaumont Hospital, Lancaster. Smallpox cases will be admitted to the Ainsworth Smallpox Hospital, near Bury.

Ambulance transport for cases of infectious disease is provided by the Westmorland County Council and is based in Kendal.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES TABLE.

DISEASE	Total	Ages												Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
		-1	1-	2-	3-	4-	5-	10-	15-	20-	35-	45-	65-		
Measles	362	16	27	48	47	52	163	6	2	1	-	-	-	1	
Scarlet Fever	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	
Infective Jaundice	11	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	4	1	2	2	-	
Encephalitis	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	
Meningococcal Meningitis	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Malaria (contracted abroad)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
Typhoid Fever	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	
TOTAL	380	16	27	49	48	52	164	7	2	8	1	2	4	4	

TUBERCULOSIS TABLE.

Age Periods	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Respira- tory		Non-res- piratory		Respira- tory		Non-res- piratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55 ..	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—
65 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total ..	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—

The number of tuberculosis patients on the register at the year end were:—

		1971.	1972.
Respiratory	...	18	11
Non-Respiratory	...	4	3
		—	—
		22	14
		—	—

HOUSING.

Under the Housing Acts your Council has a duty to consider the general housing conditions in your district, to ascertain whether any are unfit for human habitation, and to assess the need for further houses. You have powers to deal with substandard houses, powers to provide new houses for all classes, and various powers and duties in the management of your Council's housing estates. Good housing conditions are an integral part of public health.

The Pattern of Housing.

About 40% of Kendal houses are under 25 years old: some 3 thousand of them having been built since the 1939-45 War, and therefore fairly well equipped with modern amenities. The municipal housing estates of Hallgarth and Sandylands were built during that time. In the more recent years private development with estates and groups of houses has flourished vigorously.

The middle third of Kendal's houses are between 30 and 50 years old. They include the municipal housing estates of Castle Grove, Rinkfield and Kirkbarrow, as well as a lot of houses built by private enterprise. The older components of this group lack modern amenities to varying extent. They seem well worth improving.

Most of the remaining houses were built before the 1914-18 War, and many back into the Victorian era. Many of them lack modern amenities, they are awkward in design, and are showing increasing signs of their fabric perishing. Some of them in the 80 to 100 years group are getting to the stage when they will not be worth saving. They are becoming the clearance problems of the next twenty years.

A small number now remains of Kendal houses which were built more than 100 years ago. They are mostly in poor structural condition, and badly sited in the remnants of ancient yards. Most of them are now condemned and vacant. Some may be preserved for architectural or historical interest, some may be saved by opening up the surrounding area, many are being converted to non-habitation uses, many are awaiting demolition. Picturesque though they may look, there is not much hope for century-old substandard hovels of a bygone way of life. Certainly not to expect people to go on living in them.

About half the houses in the Borough are owner-occupied, and about a third are owned by Kendal Corporation for letting to tenants. Private lettings are about a tenth, and there are a few service houses to complete the picture.

But the pattern of Kendal's housing can no longer be looked for

only within the Borough boundary. The neighbouring areas of South Westmorland and Windermere are considerably used as dormitories for Kendal. This overspill must be taken into account for the proper understanding of Kendal's place in the economy of the southern half of Westmorland. This will soon be recognised by the new South Lakeland District Council after the re-organisation of Local Government in 1974.

The General Picture of Slum Clearance.

Westmorland as a whole has made very encouraging progress in post-war slum clearance despite all the difficulties of the times. Since the campaign was resumed in 1948 well over 1,400 houses in the County have been dealt with by formal action under the Housing Acts. Most of these have been demolished or converted to trade use, but some of them have been reprieved by their owners undertaking to spend considerable money for comprehensive reconditioning up to modern standards.

In addition to these formal actions there have been a very considerable number of informal schemes either with the aid of improvement grants or entirely by private enterprise. The aim is to save a house whenever possible, but if it cannot be brought up to an acceptable standard of safety, decency and amenity, the sooner it is swept away the better.

Slum Clearance Progress in Kendal.

Kendal has done well with slum clearance programmes. At the end of the 1939-45 war there were about 5,300 houses in the Borough, including some five or six hundred ancient slum cottages which were between one and two centuries old: dark damp hovels, down sunless yards in the very centre of the town.

Sadly enough there were still people living in them, struggling to bring up young families, prematurely losing their battles against the disabilities of old age, amidst the rising dampness, the disrepair, the cobblestones, and the latrines at the end of a crumbling yard. Over 550 families were rescued and moved to a better way of life.

But when the priorities of common humanity had been achieved, we were still left with the empty ruins of those cottages and yards, pillaged by the vandals stealing whatever took their fancy, and the inevitable structural deteriorations speeded on towards collapse. Faced by the reproach of such a canker in our midst, and the growing clamour for central urban renewal, a policy of radical clearance was adopted.

Kendal Borough		At 31st December 1972	
Postwar Slum Clearance Programme Composition		Slum Clearance Programme	
Completion of slum clearance action started pre-war	84	Action completed by demolition or conversion to other approved use	603
Slum clearance actions started between 1945 and 1st January, 1955	117	Vacant and awaiting demolition	5
Statutory 1956-65 Ten Years Programme actually started on 1st January, 1955	300	Waiting rehousing from occupied condemned houses	11
Extra deteriorations added to the Statutory 1956-65 Programme per Circular 2/60	50	Formal actions pending at year end	1
Further deteriorations to 31st December, 1969..	43		
Circular 92/69 Four Years Programme	36		
	<hr/> 630 <hr/>		<hr/> 630 <hr/>

Our slum clearance work has been done with a rolling programme, which took in its path the various statutory programmes, and the ups and downs of rehousing opportunities. We rolled on inexorably: we got results. A balance sheet is printed on an adjacent page.

For the Record—1971.

For the purpose of departmental record and statutory returns, I have to set out the details of certain slum clearance actions taken during the current year.

Closing Orders.

Housing Act, 1957. Section 18.

3 closing orders were made during the year. Including the carry over from earlier years, the total number of houses with closing orders and still occupied at 31st December was 4. One house was made fit, and the Order was cancelled. Other schemes were submitted for the conversion of 14 such condemned houses into 12 fit houses, and were approved in principle.

Many of these properties can usefully be converted for non-habitation use, and we need to keep a watch that the vacant ones do not become derelict.

Undertakings not to use for Human Habitation.

Housing Act, 1957. Section 16.

No undertakings were accepted during the year. The total number of occupied houses subject to such undertakings at the year end was 3 waiting for the tenants to be rehoused. Again there are useful possibilities for these houses and the same risks of becoming derelict.

Undertakings to execute remedial works.

Housing Act, 1957. Sections 16 and 18.

1 offer was made for reconditioning of unfit houses under these sections of the Act. At the year end 4 such undertakings remained unsatisfied.

Demolition Orders.

Housing Act, 1957. Section 16.

No demolition orders were made during the year. 2 houses subject to such orders were still occupied. One vacant premises was awaiting demolition.

Clearance Areas.

Housing Act, 1957. Section 42.

Kendal Council have made good progress since the 1939-45 War with clearance areas in the more central parts of the town. Most have now been completed, and many have been very satisfactorily redeveloped.

The final clearance of the North-East Highgate Area was completed during 1972: the end of a 10 years' epic battle saga over New Bank Yard. It is now acceptably used as a temporary car park until someone thinks of a better use for this valuable central site after Local Government Reorganisation.

Future Programmes.

I did not see the likelihood of slum clearance areas of any considerable size in Kendal during the next five years. Efforts will probably be directed towards pruning out.

Not many traditional Kendal yards are now left. Some are falling into disrepair, and may not be suitable much longer for people to live in. I have pointed out samples of those which might well be saved, but time is running short, and there are not many encouraging signs of owners showing the colour of their money for restoration. I can do no more than give fair warning.

Circular 92/69 required your Council to furnish an estimate of slum clearance for the next four years period 1970-1973. As we had already virtually completed our post-war programme, we estimated that there will probably be only 10 to 15 houses per year needing formal condemnation action, and even then some of them may well be saved by reconditioning. Such is the short-term outlook.

But the long-term prospects suggest that Kendal will have to face another radical slum clearance drive before the 20th century is over. We may be patting ourselves on the back at the moment, and enjoying a lull from the fray, but our quarter of a century post-war achievement really represents the replacement of only some 12% of the houses existing in 1945.

Local Government re-organisation means that the new South Lakeland District Council will need to pick up the threads from where Kendal Borough Council left off, as the time scale of slum clearance spans most of this century, and is a continuing experience.

Make Do and Mend.

Until all the responsible authorities can gear their minds to the needs of the 21st century, we are trying to tide people over with

improvised short-term measures to jolly many of the older houses along for a while.

Standard grants are given for certain defined improvements if the house looks like lasting out the next 15 years: to provide a water closet, hot water systems, bath and shower, hand washbasin, and sink.

Discretionary grants for more extensive improvements may be given if the house is likely to last out for the next 30 years: to the turn of the century.

34 premises were visited re Standard Grants and 157 premises re Discretionary Grants to ascertain fitness. In 21 cases additional works of repair were required.

As many of the occupiers will not themselves last out to the 21st century, these improvement grants are a merciful attempt to make conditions more tolerable. But the procedure must be seen as nothing more than a stop gap device. The proper long-term solution must be total replacement of obsolete houses which no longer look like measuring up to the standards of the next generation.

General Improvement Areas.

Consideration was given during 1971 to the possibilities of declaring a General Improvement Area for the neighbourhood of the popularly called Blue Buildings, a group of about 100 stone-built cottages in Caroline Street, Union Street, Cross Street and Malt Kiln Hill.

These little houses are about 150 years old, but mostly still in sound structural condition, arranged in four main blocks, facing outwards, with congested backyards in the hollow middle of each block, and a few outliers on the fringe.

Some of the cottages have already been modernised, either by knocking two into one, or by gutting out the interiors and rebuilding within, or simply by installing modern fittings enough for their restricted use by one or two occupiers. A few of the houses had become unfit, or were getting to the stage for possible condemnation.

With such a high-density ancient development of 100 cottages on a potentially valuable piece of central urban land, adjoining the cramped site of Kendal Green Hospital on one side, and near the expanding civic buildings complex of County Hall on the other side, it was tempting to adopt the radical doctrinaire policy of sweeping the whole of Blue Buildings away, and leave the field clear for more modern re-development.

An alternative idea was to refurbish the neighbourhood as a General Improvement Area. The technical, architectural and administrative

officers of the central government Department of the Environment came on the site with us to examine the possibilities, but finally advised against it. So that was the end of General Improvement Area schemes, as far as we got with any in Kendal.

With the impending re-organisation of Local Government in 1974, and the current impracticability of rehousing the occupiers, we decided to let supply and demand take their natural course on a short term basis up to the end of this present century. The cottages are being progressively improved by individual owners, some aided by grants from your Council, and wishful thinking that the sound of the bulldozers had been averted for the next thirty years. Time alone will tell. The new South Lakeland District Council might do well to have a fresh think about it.

The Wider Issues.

I am not convinced about the validity of desperate measures to cling to the image of Kendal as a quaint folk-museum of bygone days for seasonal visitors. The prosperity and future of Kendal depends on keeping our feet on the ground all the year round, rolling up our sleeves, exporting shoes and turbines, fabrics, food and machines, and being what we have always been, a thriving market town for the prosperous agricultural area which surrounds us, and an important supply centre for the Lake District.

That is what will keep bread and butter in the mouths of Kendal folk, and a fair share of jam as well. That is what will keep our own young people here to stay and give a hand with the job: without them there will be no future. They rightly demand that Kendal shall move with the times, keep with it, and press on smartly towards the twenty-first century. Such things are the essence of public health.

The General Need for New Houses.

The building of more new houses is the only practicable way of keeping pace with the future deterioration which must inevitably occur.

We are so near to the re-organisation of Local Government, in April 1974, that it has now become irrelevant to draw much distinction between the location of houses within the present Borough boundaries and the surrounding commuter belt in the rural countryside of southern Westmorland. Supply and demand will sort it all out.

But I cannot stray too far down the byways of Kendal's social scene, except to illustrate my very sincere belief that one cannot

divorce public health from the ways in which our own folk keep a roof over their heads and bread and butter in their mouths.

The Special Needs for Old People.

Both Kendal Corporation and voluntary organisations in the town have done a lot of good work in providing special houses for the elderly, but a lot more needs doing to keep pace with the increasing proportion of old people in the community. I suggest that purpose-designed bungalows and ground-floor flats are still much needed, with low fittings, handrails, lower door-handles, easy gradient steps, and suchlike special fittings.

The time is well overdue for Kendal Borough to provide groups of semi-dependency flatlets for elderly people, with resident welfare wardens. Such service has long proved its worth in the three neighbouring districts of Lakes, Windermere and South Westmorland, all with the co-operation of the welfare department of Westmorland County Council. I am glad to see a start being made, and trust that the new South Lakeland District Council and the new Cumbria County Council will carry on and develop the good work. Your Council are also planning to build 7 independent flats specifically for the disabled.

This Year's New Houses.

During the current year 7 new houses were built by the Corporation, and 203 by private enterprise. Conversions produced 8 extra dwellings.

Housing Management.

The Corporation own 2,347 houses, which require increasing attention. Occasional visits were made by the Public Health Department during the year in connection with the public health aspects of housing management in the municipal estates. The rents of your houses range between £1.37 and £2.90 exclusive of rates. The rateable values vary between £29 and £78.

Housing Nuisances.

58 visits were made to investigate complaints in houses leading to the service of 17 informal notices, and no Statutory notices, for their remedy. In no case was it necessary to obtain a Court Order.

Verminous Houses.

There were no cases requiring action during the year.

Qualification Certificates, 1969.

Under the 1969 Housing Act qualification certificates were introduced, which when granted enabled landlords of tenanted houses to receive a fair rent for their properties as assessed by the Rent Officer. During the year 23 houses were inspected for such fitness and 13 Certificates were issued. 4 provisional approvals were outstanding and 5 were refused or withdrawn.

Dangerous Buildings.

The operation of these provisions lies with the Borough Engineer, as far as the formal procedures of the Act are applied, but the Health Department often has a coincidental interest in some of these premises.

Dilapidated Buildings and Neglected Sites.

Public Health Act, 1961. Section 17.

There are a lot of dangerous buildings and walls which seem either to present physical dangers or to be a deplorable spectacle. Most of them are within half a mile of the Town Hall.

The co-operation of all departments is needed to bring the necessary pressure to bear on people to do the right thing with their decrepit property.

Caravans and Camping.

Normally caravans cause little trouble, because most of them simply pass through the town on their way to other parts of the countryside.

The permanent residential site for 15 caravans is operated at Oxenholme: it really only reflects the housing shortage. There are no licences in force for individual caravan sites. There are no tented camping sites.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Since 1962 the public water supply has been administered by the Lakes and Lune Water Board on which your Council has representation. I record my appreciation of the help and liaison maintained by the officers of the Board.

Kendal has an abundant water supply because there is a connection to the Manchester Corporation aqueduct to augment the limited local overground and underground sources.

The overground sources are upland surface from rather restricted catchment areas on the Silurian rocks to the east of the town, where the yield is usually insufficient to keep the storage reservoirs full at Fisher Tarn and Birds Park.

The underground source is a very shallow open well, sunk about 10 feet into the subsoil and alluvial gravel alongside the River Kent, and now getting surrounded by industrial and housing development. Some of the water is used as a direct supply to two large dairy factories, some is fed direct into the public water main, and the rest is pumped up to the Birds Park reservoir.

Thus insofar as the quantity of water is concerned, I advise your Council being satisfied in your statutory duty to ascertain that the water supplies in the Borough are sufficient.

Your Council has the further statutory duty to ascertain that the water supplies in the Borough are wholesome. By liaison with the Lakes and Lune Water Board, periodical tests are made on samples of water from consumers' taps in the town, and some typical results are set out in Appendix A at the end of this report. A similar liaison with one of the large dairy factories for regular routine checks, and various other sporadic tests are made to build up a picture of the effectiveness of sterilisation treatment to safeguard the public health.

The quality of the treated water is usually excellent. The upland gathering-grounds carry a minimal risk of human excretal pollution: the storage time in the reservoirs favours natural purification: the subsequent distribution system includes chemical sterilization with chlorine.

My duty as a medical officer of health requires me to look deeper than just a record of recent satisfactory bacteriological tests on the public water supply. I must look critically at the whole range of safeguarding the public health from waterborne disease. I have no statutory responsibility towards the Lakes and Lune Water Board, which is a separate authority in its own right, and no obligations on its behalf.

Consequently I have to regard the Board like any other purveyors of food and drink to consumers in Kendal.

I am assured that the Lakes and Lune Water Board imposes a vigorous routine medical check on all waterworks employees, and special care is taken to sterilise the mains after repairs or replacements, and to maintain a safe level of residual chlorine in the water when it reaches the consumers' taps. The Department of the Environment has recently revised and defined the safeguards to be adopted in the operation and management of waterworks. I remain most appreciative of such helpful measures adopted by the Water Board.

Nevertheless I am having increasing foreboding about the safety of the shallow well at Mints Feet. In recent years there has been steady encroachment of the nearby industrial estate, and new housing development. Nothing more can be done to protect the presumptive gathering ground of local subsoil and river terrace gravel. The river itself is carrying sewage effluents and industrial wastes from the upstream areas, and the whole shallow well is liable to occasional floods.

The state of the raw water at Mints Feet Well might not be quite so significantly risky if it could all be treated with two or more lines of defence. The safeguards have diminished in certain respects in recent years.

When the earlier primitive arrangements were radically revised about a decade ago, the agreed procedure was for all the water abstracted from Mints Feet Well to be given a high dose of chlorine there before being pumped up a newly-built rising main into Birds Park reservoir, where it was diluted with the water from other sources and had further natural purification. Then the water from Birds Park was all hypochlorinated in the distribution system before reaching the town. I was satisfied with such a procedure.

Since then various changes occurred, apart from the building development encroachments towards Mints Feet Well. The first crack in the security procedure happened when engineering factors caused a direct water pipe connection from the shallow well to serve two newly-built large factories nearby, both registered dairies. Although the Water Board takes reasonable precautions to render the water safe, I have advised the dairy factories to maintain their own checks and vigilance to ensure that the water is at all times suitable for their special requirements.

The second crack in security was when the rising main from Mints Feet Well to Birds Park reservoir was tapped off mid-route to

augment the water supply to a newly-built corporation housing estate. The lines of defence have been diminished for the consumers. It is hoped to cut off this direct connection when other distribution mains have been installed.

The Lakes and Lune Water Board combats these imperfections by maintaining extra precautionary measures at Mints Feet Well. The chlorination apparatus is under automatic control, to shut down the pumps on failure, and alert an alarm system. This is certainly a great improvement on the earlier procedure, and goes some way towards diminishing the calculated risks of distributing water from Mints Feet shallow well.

Turning to other aspects of the public water supply which I am required to review in this report. The water is not treated with fluoride, and the natural fluorine content is very low. A dozen or so houses on the outskirts of the town are served by wells and surface water private installations.

SEWERAGE.

Most of the Borough is served by public sewers, but about 120 houses remain dependent upon septic tanks. Some of the sewers are overloaded and require enlargement.

A major reconstruction of the sewage disposal works at Wattsfield has recently been carried out.

Looking ahead towards the turn of the century, and the prospects now of Local Government re-organisation, and the creation of new Regional Water Authorities, I forecast that this will probably be the last major attempt to recondition Kendal's main sewage works on the Wattsfield site.

It was nicely away out in the country when it was built, but it has since been engulfed by the residential expansion of the town, and its area is cribbed on the other side by the natural banks of the river. Its further major enlargement seems difficult, but more importantly there is the doubt whether it ought to be there anyway.

By the time the loan has been paid off on the capital sunk in the sewage disposal works, I reckon that the new Regional Water Authority will favour alternative proposals for moving the whole process further downstream, and logically picking up sewage from the likely new development southwards from the present Borough boundary.

Although the inevitable smells and presence of a sewage works may not constitute a serious public health risk, such places were never designed to be sited in the middle of built-up areas, and equally today they are not cheerfully tolerated, even by the people who chose to buy houses alongside. I reckon that in the long term we ought not to continue harbouring this unpleasant historical accident at Wattsfield.

Meanwhile I am grateful to the Borough Engineer for all he does to minimise complaints. He has also the much more important problem of getting the town's sewage down to Wattsfield, through an old sewer system that itself is getting into a poor way in places. It looks an expensive prospect for the years ahead, but waste disposal is one of the most vital duties for safeguarding the public health in towns.

65 other complaints were made to our Health Department during the year regarding drainage. All were investigated and remedied. The emergency service for the clearance of blocked drains at private households has been much appreciated.

Public Conveniences.

Public conveniences fairly well serve the centre of the town. Proper supervision of conveniences is difficult and they have suffered much wanton damage by hooligans.

Additional conveniences have become available at the bus station, including special provision for disabled people.

Your Council are concurrently constructing two more public conveniences at Highgate and Peppercorn Lane.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Refuse Collection.

With very few exceptions in the remote parts of the Borough there is a weekly removal of refuse. Trade refuse is collected separately at an agreed scale of charges.

Refuse Disposal.

Tipping is carried out under great difficulties at an old quarry on the Fell Estate. Both the collection and disposal services are administered by the Borough Engineer. Alternative disposal elsewhere is urgently needed.

Street Cleansing.

The main streets are maintained by the staff of the Borough Engineer. The open-air markets cause considerable work but the general appearance of the roads is good.

FOOD HYGIENE.

General Powers.

Your Council bear most of the statutory responsibility for safeguarding the public from foodborne diseases. The main aim is directed towards securing proper and hygienic conditions for the manufacture, preparation and sale of food. The secondary aim is to trace and localise any outbreaks of disease which may occur in spite of preventive measures.

Precautions against Contamination.

Food hygiene is steadily improving throughout your area. Public opinion is well ahead of the law and most of the traders are aware of the fact.

The Health Department continued giving lectures to Food Hygiene courses at the College of Further Education.

The responsibility for safe food does not rest entirely with the trader as the housewife must play her part as well. Quite a lot of strange things happen to food between the shop counter and the dinner plate, and the educational campaign has had to be carried into the home. Foodborne diseases, mild dysenteries and attacks of diarrhoea and vomiting are not infrequent in our homes and among our visitors. I am confident that high standards will reduce these preventable diseases.

Ice-Cream.

Manufacture by hot mix, cold mix, storage and sale ...	2
Manufacture by cold mix, storage and sale	2
Storage and sale only	134

During the year 22 visits of inspection were made to ice-cream premises. On the whole the position is reasonably satisfactory.

Prepared Meats.

The number of premises on the register under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, used for the preparation of sausages, potted meat, pressed meat and pickled foods, was 53 at the year end. No particular difficulties have been encountered in these trades.

Liquid Eggs.

The Liquid Egg (Pasteurisation) Regulations, 1963.

There are no egg pasteurisation plants in the Borough.

Poultry Processing.

There are no poultry processing premises in the Borough.

Food Trade Categories.

The Secretary of State requires me to furnish certain details about the categories of food trade carried on during the year. They are set out in the adjacent table. 212 visits were made during the year.

Regulation 16 relates to the requirement for providing wash-hand basins, and Regulation 19 relates to the requirements for providing facilities for washing food and equipment used in food businesses.

Category of Premises	Number	Number fitted to comply with Reg. 16	Number to which Reg. 19 Applies	Number fitted to comply with Reg. 19
Bakehouses	7	7	7	7
Licensed Hotels and Inns ..	30	30	30	30
Private Hotels	24	24	24	24
Off Licences	7	7	—	—
Industrial Canteens	12	12	12	12
Clubs	13	13	13	13
Restaurants, Cafes, Snack Bars ..	29	29	29	29
Fish and Chip Shops	6	6	6	6
Grocers	49	49	49	49
Fishmongers, Greengrocers ..	14	14	8	8
Butchers	18	18	18	18
Wholesale Depots	8	8	8	8
Manufacturers, Bottlers Etc. ..	9	9	9	9
Others (Sweets Etc).	25	(Figures Not Available)		

Milk Registrations.

At the year end there were 79 registered distributors of milk, and 3 registered dairies which were not dairy farms. No particular difficulties were met, and milk-round vehicles were generally maintained in good condition.

Pathogenic Organisms in Milk.

Biological and other test results on 94 samples taken by various Authorities, from sources in our area, continued to be passed to me. I have had no cause during the current year to serve any notices under the Milk and Dairies Regulations to restrict the sale of milk or the activities of milk-handlers.

Special attention was directed towards the organisms of brucella abortus in the above samples. None were found.

Licensed Slaughterhouses.

The only slaughterhouse is the public abattoir at Sandylands which also serves various neighbouring areas. It is operated by a large firm of wholesale meat traders, with an exclusive right to use and manage the abattoir, albeit providing a public slaughterhouse service for individual local butchers, and to cope with casualty animals brought in.

Kendal Corporation own the premises, and are the enforcement authority for hygiene and prevention of cruelty regulations, and for meat inspection. The whole time of one public health inspector is spent at the abattoir, on a rota basis between the departmental staff.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food veterinary inspector made regular routine inspections and seemed well satisfied.

Unfit meat is removed direct to manufacturers for sterilisation before retailing as pet food or processing into animal and poultry food.

Licensing of Slaughtermen.

10 licences were issued during the year. 8 were to regular slaughtermen and 2 to butchers who might wish to kill occasionally.

Knackers' Yards.

There are none.

Condemnation of Other Food.

928 tins, 2,721 packets of various foods, 3,984 lbs. of meat products etc. were condemned in shops and warehouses, 78 visits were made for this purpose.

Method of Disposal of Condemned Food.

The Secretary of State requires me to describe the current methods for the disposal of condemned food. In this District it is by burial at the Corporation's tip. The meat products are disposed of to a contractor outside the Borough.

Condemnation of Meat at the Abattoir

Food and Drugs Act, 1955.

The following is a summary of the carcasses inspected and condemned in whole or in part:—

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known)	5278	1859	102	25,897	18,401
Number inspected ..	5278	1859	102	25,897	18,401
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci:</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned	1	38	37	70	70
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	993(1)	361 (2)	6	1218 (3)	7,428 (4)
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	18.8	21.5	42.2	5.0	40.7
<i>Tuberculosis only:</i>					
Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	—	—	—	—	96
Percentage of number inspected affected with tuberculosis ..	—	—	—	—	0.52
<i>Cysticercosis:</i>					
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	16	11	—	—	—
Carcasses submitted to treatment by refrigeration	1	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—

NOTES: The following are not included:—

- (1) 1,399 livers condemned for parasites, etc.
- (2) 1,544 livers infested with parasites.
- (3) 3,324 livers condemned for parasites, etc.
- (4) 1,831 livers infested with parasites.

GENERAL INSPECTIONS.

Establishment.

The establishment of the department was one Chief Public Health Inspector, three Additional Inspectors and two clerks. The strength of the department was maintained for most of the year.

The Chief Inspector has considerable administrative duties, the preparation of material and attendance at your Committees, and his availability for outside duties was restricted.

The senior additional inspector acts as Deputy. All three additional inspectors share the meat inspection duties at the abattoir and the general work. The two Clerks are allocated to spend half their time on Cemeteries administration and the rest on the other duties of the Health Department.

We are now able to maintain a better balance between operations and administration, and deploy our skilled resources to the best advantage. I place on record my appreciation of the valuable services of all our public health inspectors and ancillary staff.

Offensive Trades.

Carcase Boiler	...	...	...	1
Tallow Melter	...	...	...	1
Gut Scraper	...	...	...	1
Rag and Bone Dealers	...	...	...	2

Factories.

The register of factories has been completely revised and cross checked with the records maintained by H.M. Inspector of Factories at Carlisle, with whom a close working relationship is maintained.

There are 132 factories on our register. 10 inspections were made and three notices were served.

No references were made to H.M. Inspector and one was received from her. No prosecutions were required.

4 outworkers in the clothing trade were notified to your Council by factory owners in the clothing trade.

H.M. Inspector of Factories has been sent details of your Borough's administration of the relevant sections of Parts I and VIII of the Factories Act, 1961.

Factory Inspections.

Premises	Number of Premises	Number of		
		Inspec- tions	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be en- forced by Local Authorities ..	5	—	—	—
Factories not included in (1), in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	123	10	3	—
Other premises in which Sec- tion 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out- workers' premises)	4	—	—	—
Total	132	10	3	—

Cases in which Defects were found.

Particulars.	Number of cases in which Defects were found.				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found	Remedied.	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector.	By H.M. Inspector.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1) ..	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2) ..	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3) ..	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4) ..	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	3	3	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Out-work)	I	I	—	I	—
Total	4	4	—	I	—

Offices and Shops.

Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963.

This legislation makes provision for the safety, health and welfare of people employed in these premises. 168 visits were made during the year.

11 accidents were notified to our Health Department, and 4 of them merited further investigation.

Type of Premises	Registered at year end	Inspected during year	Persons Employed
Offices	138	32	1649
Retail Shops	172	68	1012
Wholesale shops and warehouses ..	31	7	296
Catering establishments open to the public, canteens	28	8	241
Fuel storage depots	1	1	9
Totals	370	116	3207

31 written notices and 53 verbal notices were served for contraven-
tions discovered.

Clean Air.

Several visits were made for smoke abatement and most industrial firms have made considerable improvements. The problem of clean air for Kendal goes deeper than this.

Kendal's position in the Kent valley leads to the cooler air collect-
ing in the lowlying parts at night. From any of the surrounding hill-
sides you can see how the natural ground mist is polluted by the
smoke from domestic chimneys and industrial premises.

I should like us to do all we can to see that Kendal's air pollution
does not become any worse, and I hope that we may be able to improve
it. With over a quarter of the houses in Kendal now in local authority
ownership, we seem to have a considerable responsibility. Indeed any
scheme for enforcing smokeless zones would have to start with visible
goodwill on one of your own housing estates. Hallgarth would be the
obvious first choice.

Anyone can see with their own eyes, from Windermere Road or

Fellside, how the smoke from the household chimneys hangs as a pall over the town on calm days and nights. Sometimes you can even feel it in your lungs down town. Public opinion is growing that this should not be so. Agitation in the local newspapers became vociferous in 1970, but a national shortage of smokeless solid fuels caused the central government to soft pedal at the time. Meanwhile our Health Department commenced a cost and feasibility study ready for when the omens look more favourable.

But irrespective of whether, or when, the idea of enforcing smokeless zones may be formally adopted, I must make one point very strongly in connection with the future planning for industrial development of the low-lying land immediately to the north of Kendal.

This land not only contains the ponding overflow areas for flooding at the confluence of the three rivers, the Mint, the Sprint and the Kent; it is also a great ponding area for the cold air which rolls down these valleys, and collects with visible temperature inversions. Its effects can be seen holding down the smoke and fumes from the Burneside mill and the factories at Mint Bridge, and drifting it towards the town.

Therefore I should deplore any further smoke or fume-emitting industrial development in this vulnerable area. There would be no objection to electrically powered factories, without byproduct fumes: but any more solid fuel or oil burning factories, or those with unpleasant fumes, should be barred from development there. The purity and public health safety of Kendal's air and environment depends on minimising the pollution which drifts down the valley towards the town on the mist from this northern basin. I trust that the new South Lakeland District Council will remember this.

Noise.

Several complaints were received during the year regarding noise nuisances. All were investigated and remedies undertaken where practicable.

Public Swimming Baths.

The Secretary of State requires me to furnish particulars about public swimming baths. The only one in the Borough is owned and managed by Kendal Corporation. It is filled with fresh water from the public mains, and is then continuously circulated through filters and chlorinated. It was built in 1882 and is showing its age.

Proposals are being examined for building a large new swimming bath on another central site in the town. It would be much welcomed.

Pet Animal Shops.

Two shops were licensed. No particular difficulties were encountered in supervision.

Pest Control.

During the year 372 premises were surveyed under the Pests Act, 1949. 135 premises were found to be infested by rats or mice, and were treated. 757 visits were made, and 129 complaints were investigated. The public sewers were test-baited twice a year and treated accordingly.

I must draw attention to the health risks of the increasing number of semi-wild pigeons in the central areas of the town. In addition to the objectionable nuisance of their messy excrement on pavements, window ledges and roofs, there is a danger that they may spread disease to human beings.

We now know from both national and local information that germs of the nasty disease of psittacosis have been spreading from pigeons to people. The semi-wild local pigeons probably get infected from dropout poorly stray birds. The germs are passed on in their excrement.

Although the sight and sound of pigeons in the town may give delight to some people, the joy seems overdone, and I suggest that it would be a sensible health precaution to cull their numbers and their eggs. There are more ways than one of doing it.

I regard the work of the Pest Control staff as a very valuable service for safeguarding the public health against the spread of disease.

Common Lodging Houses.

There were none.

National Assistance Act, 1948.

Section 47 — Compulsory Removal.

No Court Orders were sought during the year, but several people were under constant supervision.

Such cases are extremely distressing to deal with and the course of compulsory removal is reserved to meet the emergencies of a last resort when all other methods of help have failed. Sometimes it is very hard to decide what is really in the best interests of the patient.

Special liaison is maintained with the Welfare Authority to prevent people from getting into such difficulties. Home-help services, hostels

and partial dependency schemes may meet some of the problems. I hope that the harsh step of compulsory removal will be less needed as time goes by. It is so often tantamount to a death warrant.

Public Mortuary and Post-mortem Rooms.

Your Council do not provide any public mortuaries or post-mortem rooms. Adequate facilities are available at the Westmorland County Hospital in Kendal by arrangement.

Burial Grounds.

Your municipal cemetery at Parkside Road is maintained in a creditable state. A start was made on the removal of kerbstones and raised earthen mounds. The response from those possessing burial rights in private plots was good and the progress being made will make the task of grass cutting much easier.

Although there may not be any actual public health risks, I find it rather distasteful to see various burial grounds and cemeteries neglected around Kendal. It is the living who cause the public health nuisances, not the dead. I wish all these decrepit burial grounds could be tidied up and laid out pleasantly like the fine example set by Kendal Parish Church.

Your Council were exploring the possibilities of establishing a crematorium in the vicinity by co-operation with neighbouring local authorities. I do not see much hope of success before local government reorganisation, but I trust that the new South Lakeland District Council will have a fresh look at the need.

Laboratory Services.

The Public Health Laboratory Service establishments at Preston and Carlisle now serve this area, and do it very well. We are glad of their help.

APPENDIX A
LABORATORY EXAMINATION OF PUBLIC WATER
SUPPLY

Nature of Test	Mints Feet Raw Water	Mixed Upland Source	Town Main Mixed Water
Pr. coli count 37°C ..	0	—	0
Faecal Coli/strep ..	—	—	—
Date sampled last ..	14.12.72	—	12.12.72
Character	Clear	Clear	Clear
Reaction	6.7	7.3	7.3
Ammonical Nitrogen ..	Nil	.045	Nil
Albuminoid Ammonia ..	.08	.235	.11
Total Solids	128	64	70
Hardness—Total ..	86	38	38
Carbonate ..	58	20	18
Non-carbonate ..	68	26	32
Chlorides	13	8	9
Nitrates	1.18	.16	.4
Nitrites	—	—	—
O.2 Absorbed .. ..	.08	.84	.80
Heavy Metals	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rainfall 24 hours ..	.35"	.51"	9.9 mm
Date Sampled	29.9.70	6.10.70	29.2.72
Laboratory	Preston	Preston	Preston

Chemical analyses expressed in parts per 1,000,000.

